

Bad News From Home (Nehemiah Ch 1:1-11)

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Bad News from Home (Neh. Ch 1)

I have been asking the Lord for direction on what to preach on Sunday night for a while. God has really pulled my heart to the book of Nehemiah. Nehemiah is a book of leadership (which I need) and is a book of recovery and restoration. This church has been through a lot over the past years, a lot of difficulty a lot of turmoil, a lot of disappointment. Could it be that walls that once stood strong and defending have weakened, cracked and even fallen. I know personally that over the years they have in my own heart believed it is God's intention to use the book of Nehemiah to build us all up to recover us and prepare us for the great things that lie ahead. Historically Nehemiah is positioned at the end of the exile period. Remember, God punished his people for turning away from him by removing them from the land and the city that they trusted in and placing them in Babylon. After a 70 year exile, the people over time and in different groups were allowed to go back to Jerusalem. Some Jews had been

I. The Report of The Land (vs 1-3) - The news was not good. Nehemiah has expected things to be progressing and developing instead he received a dismal report. My question is

you is if someone were to report on your Christian life

A. The People were in Reproach (vs 3a-b)

First of all it says they were in great affliction. They were having a very difficult go about things. More than likely with the walls down they had no protection from enemies that would steal and destroy. They were in reproach - scorn taunt disgrace. They were mocked and criticized by their enemies!

B. Their Protection was in Ruin (vs 3c)

This was the center piece of their problem. When Nebuchadnezzar invaded he destroyed the walls of the city that they would be over run. The walls gave them power and protection and ability to withstand the enemy. Proverbs 25:28. A life w/o self-control is like a city w/o walls, they are easily defeated. Malachi - "He is open to Satanic attack."

C. Their Passages were in Ruin (vs 3d)

The gates were burned as well. These were the entry ways into the city. These were to control what comes in and what goes out. But these were in ruin. Enemies could walk right in, that which was intended to stay in the city could be carried right out! It's seems a hopeless situation but as we will see,

II. The Reaction of the Listener vs 4

What a reaction from Nehemiah. This was a complete shock to Him. Hanani may have been used to it, climatized, desensitized but

1) ...some Jews had been back in the land for some 150 years when the Book of Nehemiah opens up. Nehemiah's brother and others were come back to Babylon to the city of Shushan where Nehemiah worked as the king's cupbearer. When I was in collage, that first semester, I wanted to know about every thing that was going on back home. High School, basket ball, football, local news. Here we find Nehemiah asking "How are things going back home?"

2) ...Christian life to someone that had not seen you in 5, 10, 20 years. Would it be a good report? Have you gone forward, building and growing in the grace of God for the kingdom of God, has the work ceased. Are the walls still down the gates burned and your life in derision by your enemies?

3) Proverbs 25:28 He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.

4) ...Satanic attacks and temptations and encounters difficulty in resisting temptation because of a lack of discipline and control. Israel demonstrated a lack of discipline and character in not having the walls rebuilt after a number of years." They had had 150 years and yet had still not rebuilt the walls. Defeat can easily become a cycle.

5) ...will see through a dependence upon God through prayer and a resolve in our hearts, and a vision of what God can do, the broken walls and gates of our lives can be rebuilt! We don't have to live in a cycle of defeat!

- 1) So often we can be acclimatized to our condition, that's when we need to outside view of the word of God, to see our true condition.
- 2) ...runs rampant, where just any old wicked lustful thought is able to march right through the gates of our mind! Do we care enough about our spiritual condition to weep tears and mourn that we are not farther along in our journey with the Lord than we are?

3) ...our church for revival, but through Christ all things are possible. You can't build those wall in you own ability, but through the power of the Holy Spirit, God can rebuild the walls!

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Nehemiah was cut to the heart over the cities condition.

A. A Sorrowful Action (v5a-c) - I have seen some one receive bad news and not be able to stand, they get weak in the knees and then burst into tears. I wonder if Nehemiah and the men of Judah were looking at each other seeing what his problem. Get out of the healing water and see the destructive the ruin of our self will and undisciplined life where sin runs rampant

B. A Summons to Act (v5d) - From this burden of bad news came a resolve to do something about the situation. So many times God can use a burden to spur us on to action. Nehemiah could have said there is nothing I can do about it, just cry a few tears and go on.

But No! it summoned Nehemiah to act to fast, to pray, to attempt to do something.

C. A Seeking of the Almighty (v6) Nehemiah is just one man. Jerusalem is thousands of miles away, if anything can be done through Nehemiah it will have to be done my God. Nehemiah is simply making himself available for God to use him. You may feel powerless to do anything about the walls fallen around, but God can't affect our lives

III. The Request to the Lord (v5-11)
Nehemiah turns to God in prayer. The only one who has power to change the situation completely, in Nehemiah's prayer we learn

Some things about prayer. Notice...

A. The Adoration of The Sovereign ^{V55}

Nehemiah comes to God in adoration stating who God is. God doesn't need to be informed of who he is but we do. He is a great God who is to be feared and revered not trifled with. Yet he is also a loving God who keeps his promise to his own.

B. The Admitting of Sin ^{V56-7}

Nehemiah spends some time getting right w/ God. Notice the we words and I words. Wait I thought it was those back in Jerusalem's broken. We must realize whether it is a nation city or church or our personal lives, I am the problem! In response to

C. The Application of Scripture ^{V58-9}

It is always good practice to pray scripture when we call on the Lord. Faith in God is faith that God will do what he has said. God this is what you said, I'm trusting in it. I believe and trust that you keep your promises!

D. The Asking of the Servant ^{V510-11}

In verse 11 Nehemiah asks for mercy to be granted in the eyes of this man. Who's he talking about? He was the cupbearer. Privately a man very close to the King and very trusted by the King. The fear him to do something concerning the broken

IV. Closeness - My question to you tonight is if someone were to give report on the condition of your own heart, would it be a bad report. If so are you indifferent to

1. ...response to a news paper article on "What is wrong with this country?" Renoun author and Christian apologist G.K. Chesterton wrote an editorial that read, "In response to your recent artial entitled "What is wrong with this country?" "I am." Yours truly, G.K. Chesterton. It's not my brother nor my sister, but it's me oh lord standin' in the need of prayer!
2. ...broken walls is but his providential standing before the king and **Proverbs 21:1** *The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.* God could touch that kings heart. Just as God could touch that kings heart God can touch and work in our own heart to do something about the broken condition of our lives, our church, our city and nation.
3. ...are you indifferent to that report, uncaring or do you have a burden to see the walls rise high again. What about our church? When was the last time God placed upon your heart a burden for your church? How could God use you to rebuild and add to the life of our church.